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SILVER-BLACK FOX FARMING  
OF INCREASING IMPORTANCE.

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Approximately 4,849 silver-black foxes are being bred in captivity in the United States, according to reports to the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, from 215 fox ranches, representing a value in animals and equipment estimated at \$4,279,830. All reports have not yet been received, and conservative estimates place the number of silver-black fox in this country at from 5,000 to 6,000. Some ranchmen estimate the number as high as 10,000.

Statistics on the fox-ranching business being gathered by the bureau indicate that fox raising in the United States, especially in the northern tier of States, is rapidly becoming an important industry. The information sought has to do chiefly with the location and number of ranches, number of foxes, and money invested.

Prince Edward Island, Canada, is regarded as the center of the industry. Many foxes are now bred in captivity in a great number of States, including Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, and California, and in Alaska. It is probable that there are other States in which fox farming is carried on, as the records of the bureau are not yet complete.

Ranchers Reticent About Their Business.

Officials say it is very difficult to secure authentic information for the reason that some ranchers decline to fill out and return the questionnaires sent them. Many ranchers, who volunteer information, report it in such a manner that it is sometimes very difficult to interpret. Then, too, in addition to raising silver-black foxes, some ranchers keep red and cross foxes, skunks, martens, and muskrats; the amount of money invested and reported, therefore, in such cases naturally covers the whole project, making it impossible to allot the correct amount for breeding silver-black foxes. Some ranchers board foxes for other breeders, which also adds to the difficulty of securing correct information. These facts, it is said, should be borne in mind in determining the value of the following figures concerning silver-black foxes. These figures are preliminary as the reports have not all been received.

Approximate number and value of silver-black foxes and fur-farm equipment reported in the United States:

State	Number of ranchers.	Number of foxes.	Value of animals and equipment.
California	2	14	\$ 20,000
Colorado	3	9	10,200
Idaho	1	4	3,000
Iowa	1	7	2,000
Illinois	1	20	7,000
Maine	41	910	530,350
Massachusetts	17	488	758,700
Michigan	70	1,295	990,375
Minnesota	14	516	317,300
Montana	5	130	134,000
New Hampshire	3	68	54,500
New York	12	510	733,205
Ohio	5	40	112,700
Pennsylvania	4	189	61,500
Wisconsin	22	551	493,200
Vermont	7	96	49,200
Washington	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2,600</u>
	215	4,849	\$ 4,279,830

The permits issued by the Department of Agriculture for the importation of foxes into the United States from Canada for the year 1920 totalled 805 as compared with 335 in 1919. Here, again, it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of foxes coming in for the reason that many are brought in for exhibition purposes and then returned to Canada. The number of silver-black foxes in Canada in 1919 is given in a preliminary report of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics as 6,433, with animals valued at \$3,013,115, not including equipment. There were 2,020 pelts sold at a total valuation of \$482,364. These figures, it is said, are as nearly correct as it is possible to secure; but it is thought that there are undoubtedly many more foxes in Canada than are here reported.